



Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council

▶ HIGHLIGHTS

2019 Annual Report

Empowerment, Opportunity, Inclusion





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A LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP



2019: MAKING CHANGE

Dear friends and colleagues,

Change is happening at the Council and all across Maryland! After 20 years, Brian Cox retired from the Council. We will not forget his unwavering passion and dedication to the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities or his long-time leadership as the executive director of the Council. He has undoubtedly changed the lives of many. As the Council moves forward, we will use the knowledge, experience, and guidance he imparted on us to continue making change.

Change occurs by creating opportunities, eliminating barriers, and empowering people, among other things. It also takes strong partnerships and commitment.

In 2019, some of the ways the Council created change were by:

- ▶ Strengthening the skills of people with developmental disabilities, family members, and others to influence and make change across Maryland and within their communities.

- ▶ Creating opportunities for 200 people with developmental disabilities to work and have meaningful days when not working.
- ▶ Eliminating barriers for more children with disabilities to learn and play alongside their peers without disabilities by building the capacity of 118 child care providers.

Together, we will continue to make great progress in meeting our goals to support people with developmental disabilities and their families to lead the lives they want, participate in meaningful ways, and influence change in communities that welcome and support everyone.

Sincerely,

Kalani Brown

Kalani Brown
CHAIRPERSON

Rachel London

Rachel London
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

VISION AND MISSION

OUR VISION

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council envisions a state where all people with developmental disabilities exercise control over their lives, reach their full potential, and lead healthy, fulfilling lives with enriching relationships.

OUR MISSION

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council's mission is to advance the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life by eliminating barriers, creating opportunities, empowering people, and promoting innovation.

TO ACCOMPLISH OUR MISSION, THE COUNCIL:

- ▶ Educates and informs policymakers about issues of importance to people with developmental disabilities and their families.
- ▶ Advocates for policies, practices, laws, and services that support people with developmental disabilities to exercise control over their lives, reach their full potential, and lead productive, meaningful lives.
- ▶ Designs and funds initiatives that increase community inclusion, improve services and supports, and increase opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to pursue their hopes, dreams, and aspirations.
- ▶ Promotes innovative approaches to supporting people to live, learn, work, and enjoy community life.
- ▶ Advocates for the elimination of barriers that create separation and segregation and limit opportunities for full inclusion and community participation.
- ▶ Raises public awareness about people's contributions and capabilities so differences are respected, attitudes change, and inclusion and equality become an expectation.
- ▶ Supports people with developmental disabilities and their family members to develop advocacy and leadership skills to affect change in their own lives and the lives of others.

The Council works in partnership with people with developmental disabilities and their families, as well as other individuals and organizations, to bring about lasting change. We develop five-year state plans that establish our priorities and serve as a roadmap for accomplishing our goals.

Who We Are

A small staff works on behalf of the Council to carry out its mission and address the priorities and goals established in the Council's five-year state plan. The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council is part of a network of developmental disability councils.

Stay Connected

To learn more about the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council and our work, visit our website: md-council.org

For the latest news and information, sign up for email news on the home page.

Follow us on:

 Facebook ([facebook.com/MDDDCouncil/](https://www.facebook.com/MDDDCouncil/))

 Twitter (@MDDDCouncil)

ADVANCING INCLUSION

COMMUNITY FOR ALL

The Council is a leading advocate, helping make systemic change that improves the lives of people with developmental disabilities in Maryland. These are the highlights of our advocacy work in 2019.

The Council provided testimony on 62 bills on a wide range of issues and monitored another 89 during the 2019 legislative session. For example, the Council:

- ▶ Led efforts to inform legislators about the potential negative consequences of banning single-use plastic straws. Even though this bill did not pass, this was a strong example of advocacy and education efforts that consider the effects of policy on all Marylanders.
- ▶ Initiated and led efforts to advocate for an amendment to legislation that would require changing facilities suitable for both a child and adult in public buildings owned or leased by state or local governments.
- ▶ Supported Maryland's Fight for Fifteen, specifically noting the critical role of direct support professionals and the need for increased provider rates as the minimum wage increases.

The first-person perspective is crucial in educating lawmakers about the impact of their decisions. Three Council members provided testimony during the 2019 legislative session:

"I want to share why the use of plastic straws are critical for some people with developmental disabilities – like myself. I frequently go out for tea with friends. I would like to enjoy my beverage independently and without the assistance of others."

"I am a divorced, co-parent of two adult sons with developmental disabilities. My family has a keen interest in the minimum wage issue. Why? Because we are impacted by the low and minimum employment wages afforded to the direct care providers working with my sons."

Council staff served on 26 statewide committees, commissions, and councils to impact issues across multiple areas of emphasis and across the lifespan.

Developmental Disabilities Day at the Legislature, which the Council sponsors with the Developmental Disabilities Coalition, broke attendance records again in 2019, with over 1,800 attendees both in person and via Facebook Live. The theme "Community for All" provided a perfect backdrop to celebrate the 10 year anniversary of the closure of Rosewood Center.

"The closure of Rosewood Center and the building of community services took a lot of hard work and many sleepless nights over many years from many committed people who are in this room today," Capone said. Former delegate and long time disability champion, Jim Hubbard, was honored for his leadership to close the Rosewood Center and expand community services to people with developmental disabilities across Maryland.



1,978 people
educated through Council
"Systems Change" initiatives

ELIMINATING BARRIERS

LEARNING TOGETHER

As a result of the Council's policy efforts and grant funding, Maryland's children with developmental disabilities and their families experienced more access and opportunity to meaningfully participate in high-quality, inclusive early care and education. These accomplishments represent our efforts in 2019.

The Council collaborated with the Maryland State Department of Education's Office of Child Care to support training and technical assistance provided by a pediatric registered nurse. The \$102,550 grant to PACT for the Nurse Consultation and Coaching project will increase the capacity of child care providers to support children with developmental disabilities and special healthcare needs in inclusive settings. This project continues in 2020 and is a model for replication in other areas of Maryland.

Advocacy efforts led by the Council resulted in amendments to legislation related to the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (Kirwan Commission). Final legislation included language that expands access to prekindergarten for young children with disabilities, regardless of income, and requires training for teachers about effective tools and strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners, including students with disabilities.

Council staff served on 12 committees, coalitions, councils, and workgroups to make recommendations for improvements in early care and education, including the Special Education State Advisory Council (SESAC), the State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC), and the Education Advocacy Coalition. As a member, the Council provided input on the activities of the Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services, including how they will continue to implement the new strategic plan and narrow the school readiness and achievement gaps for children and youth with disabilities.



CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

The Council continues to build on the momentum of previous years by increasing the number of Marylanders with developmental disabilities who have jobs and careers, and meaningful days when not working. Advocating for improved outcomes for people with developmental disabilities and helping providers transform and build capacity remain top priorities. Here is how we did that:

Because of the Council's extensive advocacy and participation in the Equal Employment Act Workgroup, only 4 Maryland providers still hold 14c certificates. Established through legislation, the workgroup developed a plan to phase out the use of subminimum wage in Maryland for individuals with disabilities by October 2020. The Council provided comprehensive feedback about best practices and available resources for continued implementation of the plan that was included in the workgroup's 2019 annual report.

The Council completed work on What Matters, a collection of nine stories of struggle and success in creating meaningful days told by individuals, their families, providers, support staff, and employers. The Council distributed 555 copies of the publication, which illustrates how success comes when the right planning, support, and expectations are in place. We also made each individual story available for use as an educational tool in many settings.

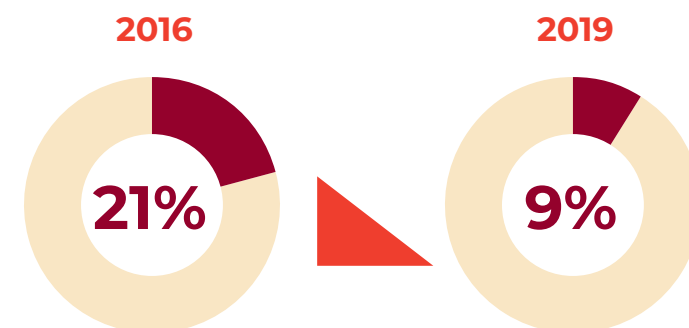
The Council, in partnership with Maryland Works, invested \$80,000 in 12 more Transforming and Improving Practices through Customized

Technical Assistance (TIP) grants. TIP grants support providers to build capacity and improve the way they provide services so that more people with developmental disabilities have the meaningful work they want and meaningful days when not working.

Because of this investment and partnership in 2019, **75 people with developmental disabilities, including 29 from rural areas, found paid work** in their communities, and **124 increased meaningful day activities** when not working.

The Council collaborated with Maryland Works on two additional initiatives to continue the success of the TIP grants. The Southern Maryland Provider Network-a collaborative effort of 10 providers in Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties-received \$20,000 for training and technical assistance about issues they identified as critical to the underserved area. This grant will continue into 2020. And, 63 employment support professionals received certification from the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) trainings. The trainings focused on job development and customized employment for employment service providers in Southern and Western Maryland and on the Eastern Shore, areas widely underserved.

THE PERCENT OF PEOPLE IN SHELTERED WORK AND PAID SUBMINIMUM WAGE DECREASED:



EMPOWERING PEOPLE

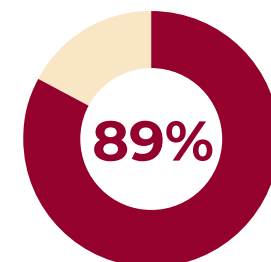
NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

The Council works with people with developmental disabilities to make sure they are front and center making change to the laws, regulations, policies, programs, and practices that affect their lives. The Council invests in initiatives that create opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to promote that change through effective advocacy and powerful influence. In 2019, the Council supported people with developmental disabilities to learn, lead, and advocate in the following ways:

With the support of a \$100,000 grant from the Council, People on the Go of Maryland (POG), a statewide advocacy group led by people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, provided trainings in advocacy and leadership to 164 people with developmental disabilities and family members, collaborated with 7 local self-advocacy groups, and influenced changes to 13 policies and programs. Advocacy efforts reached even more diverse communities through collaboration with 23 cross-disability and culturally diverse agencies and organizations, and created more opportunities for Marylanders to effectively advocate.

Youth with developmental disabilities are the next generation of advocates. Independence Now, with support from the Council, sent 28 young adults to spend 3 nights at Towson University for the Youth Leadership Forum (YLF). Participants met with leaders with disabilities as well as policy makers in Annapolis, where they learned to prepare and present legislative testimony.

Because of YLF, young Marylanders with developmental disabilities are better equipped to be lifelong advocates.



89%

of students

increased their knowledge on how to be a self-advocate

After their participation in the Youth Leadership Forum:

"I can now speak up for myself and others."

"I can now be more open about my disability."

TO PARTNER, TO LEAD, TO BE READY

Access to leadership development opportunities that empower people to lead the lives they want and transform communities is a Council priority. In 2019, the Council invested in initiatives that bolstered the leadership skills of 261 people with developmental disabilities and family members so more people actively pursue opportunities to advocate for positive and lasting change in their communities.

With a \$100,000 grant from the Council, and a strong partnership, The Arc Maryland brought Partners in Policymaking back to Maryland, after a long hiatus. As a result, we built a new generation of leaders – 9 people with developmental disabilities and 20 family members. Over the course of the program, participants completed hands on activities, participated in panel discussions, worked with national, state, and local leaders in advocacy, and met with State legislators. Moving forward, graduates of the program will continue building their leadership skills by acting as mentors to the new class of Partners in Policymaking.



With a \$74,016 grant to build on the success of the Southern Maryland LEADers initiative, Parents' Place of Maryland (PPMD) expanded the LEADers program. 14 family members from 5 underserved counties on the Eastern Shore received training to prepare them to take on leadership roles in their communities.

Outreach efforts led PPMD to connect with several parents from Haitian and Spanish speaking communities interested in the training. To meet the needs of these communities, PPMD expanded the Eastern Shore LEADers initiative to include a one-day "hybrid" curriculum, adapted for the Haitian community and Spanish-speaking families, and provided the trainings in Spanish and Creole to 16 families. A result of the success of the condensed "hybrid" curriculum, the Council funded PPMD to reach more diverse and underserved communities in Western Maryland and additional Haitian and Spanish speaking communities on the Eastern Shore.

"Connecting with guest speakers, staff, and the other Partners, has been a treasure and a powerful networking opportunity, making this an invaluable experience and one that I hope will allow me to be a change-maker for my son and others."

–Parent from rural western Maryland

CONNECTING, LEARNING, AND LISTENING

SIBS2019

This spring, the Maryland and Washington, DC Developmental Disabilities Councils partnered to host Sibs2019. 224 siblings of people with developmental disabilities, family members, and professionals came together from across the all regions of Maryland and DC for the second conference for and about siblings. This time, the conference emphasized three themes – connecting, learning, and listening. Siblings of all ages did just that by participating in interactive workshops and discussions, attending sessions on multicultural challenges, mental health, dating and relationships, and parent perspectives, or participating in activities just for young adults, teens, fathers and sons, and siblings ages 6 to 13.

“The sibling conference is something I’ve been missing my entire life. Connecting with others that share similar experiences left my heart full.”

–Sibling, Washington DC

“Never before have I left so inspired and empowered after spending a day with strangers. I cannot wait for future events like this.”

–Sibling, Washington, DC

“I love the interaction with the other sibs and the information I receive.”

–Sibling, Maryland/Anne Arundel

“By far the best conference regarding support for individuals with I/DD ever!”

–Sibling/ Parent, Virginia

“It’s not just me. That’s good to know.”

–Sibling, Maryland/Montgomery

“Best conference I’ve attended in years. Great community, speakers, venue.”

–Sibling, Maryland/Howard

“Sibs2019 was a great experience and opportunity to make connections, share experiences and learn valuable information I can use to advocate for my sibling and for other siblings.”

–Sibling, Washington, DC

“Wonderful conference – lucky to have attended!”

–Sibling, Pennsylvania

SUPPORTING FAMILIES

CHARTING THE LIFECOURSE

Many families are the only source of support for people with developmental disabilities, a role that requires support and connection within their communities - with employers, support services, and each other. In 2019, the Council continued its partnership with the Developmental Disabilities Administration and a diverse leadership team to support the Community of Practice (CoP) for Supporting Families.

The CoP facilitates and supports coalitions of families and state and local organizations to improve policies, practices, and services to better assist and support families. The statewide CoP increased the capacity and competencies of the statewide leadership team and strengthened, expanded, and sustained nine local Community of Practices.

The Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) Framework was created by families to help people of all abilities and all ages and their families develop a vision for a good life. The framework encourages people

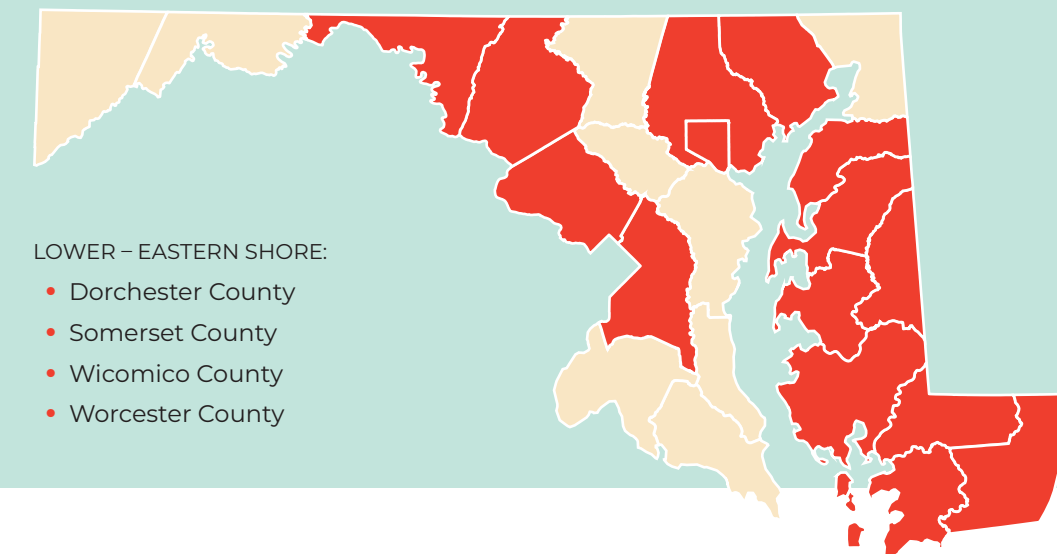
to think about what they need to know and do, identify how to find or develop supports, and discover what it takes to live the lives they want. In 2019, the DDA incorporated the CtLC in two new support waivers and the person centered planning tool.

With a grant from the Council, Towson University held a free workshop for community members and educators to learn more about the Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) framework. Educators and families learned how to use the CtLC framework to think strategically about the services and supports needed to aid their students and children to live their best life. Participants noted:

“Every parent needs to have this training” and “Charting the LifeCourse has shown me the significance of seeing the ability in a place where the disability is always seen”. One faculty member from the College of Education, Department of Special Education will participate in the spring 2020 national CtLC Ambassador Training series.

COP LOCATIONS:

- Baltimore City
 - Baltimore County
 - Frederick County
 - Garrett County
 - Harford County
 - Montgomery County
 - Prince Georges County
 - Washington County
- MID-SHORE EASTERN SHORE:
 - Caroline County
 - Kent County
 - Queen Anne’s County
 - Talbot County



INCREASING KNOWLEDGE

INTEGRATION OF INFORMATION

Information is power and Maryland is a diverse state. In effort to ensure that all Marylanders have access to important information to people with developmental disabilities and family members, the Council's Diversity Work Team made sure the information we share is accessible to a broad range of stakeholders, including underserved communities. In 2019, the Council published and distributed the following:

Planning Now, with the web version available as an accessible PDF in English and Spanish, is a comprehensive, easy-to-use guide written specifically for families of children and adults with developmental disabilities. Topics covered include financial and healthcare benefits, wills, trusts, tax considerations, financial planning, and others.

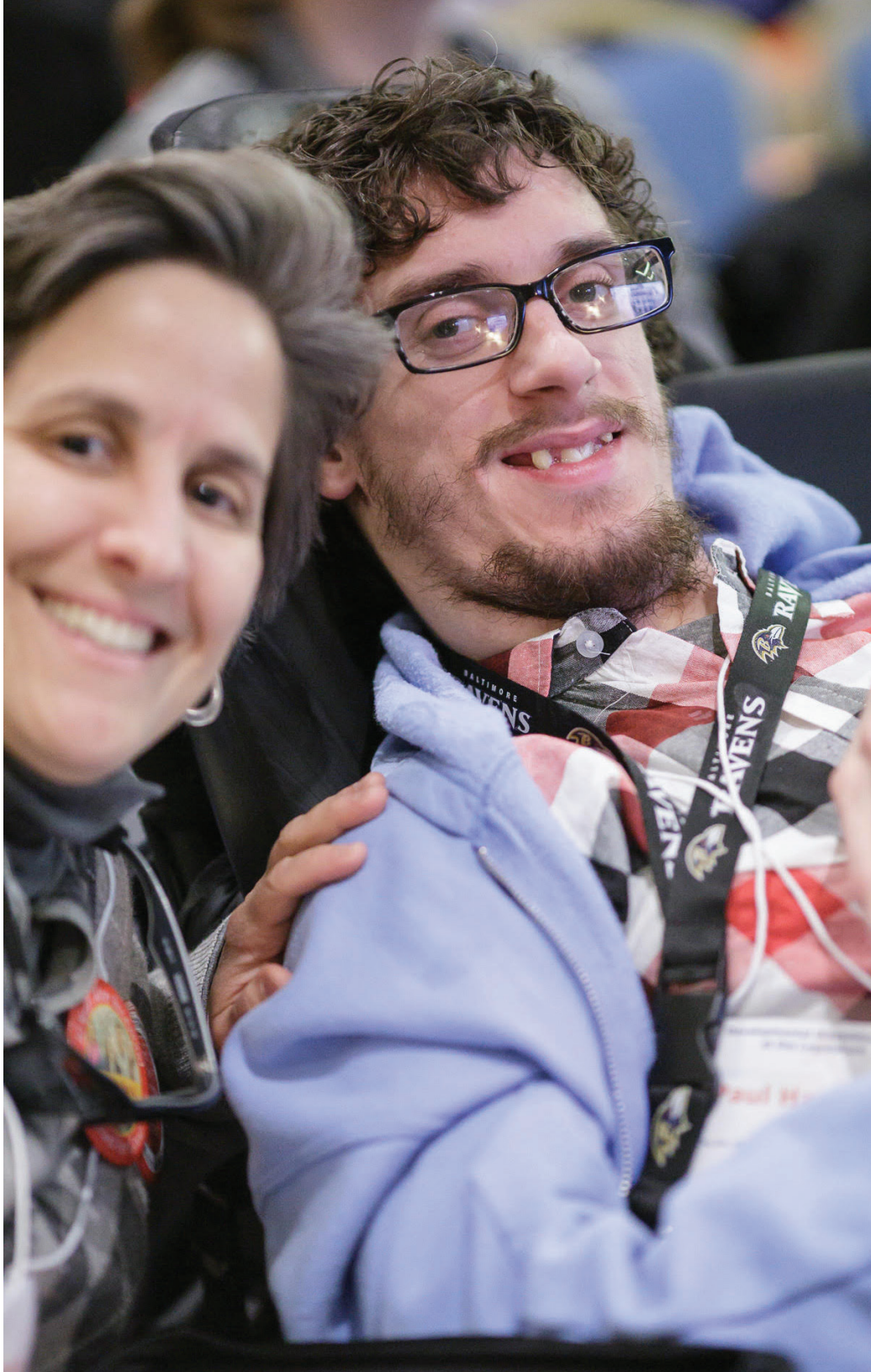
DDA Information Sheets: Working with Disability Rights Maryland and the Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities, the Council finalized informational sheets in English and Spanish about the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) service system, including Overview of the DDA, DDA Waiting List, Coordinators of Community Service, and Person-centered planning. The sheets are now available on the website in Chinese.

Additionally, the Council brochure is now available in:

- ▶ Chinese
- ▶ Spanish
- ▶ French
- ▶ Tagalog
- ▶ Korean

The Council, in partnership with the Maryland ABLE program, began developing a user-friendly guide to make the program more widely accessible. The guide will be available in 2020.

7,882 people access Council information through email and social media communications



RAISING EXPECTATIONS

EXPECTATIONS MATTER

In 2019, the Council continued to spread the message of the “Expectations Matter Expect Ability” campaign, which challenges people to think about the ways expectations matter in our daily lives and how assumptions and behaviors might serve as barriers.

The Council provided 1,542 Expectations Matter education and awareness materials to promote the campaign at sponsored events, to grantees, and to other stakeholders to expand the reach and influence of the message. The following events from around the State are just a sample: Partners in Policymaking participants; Honestly Autism Day; the Youth Leadership Forum; the Montgomery County Transition work group; and People on the Go of Maryland's 30th Bi-annual Conference.

We also infused the expectations matter message into our communications. Here are some of the strategies we used:

- ▶ 3,596 People received Expectations Matter communications
- ▶ 1,542 Expectations Matter campaign materials were distributed to raise awareness

- ▶ 19 Social Media posts (Facebook and Twitter) used #ExpectationsMatter #ExpectAbility with relevant information shared
- ▶ 21 resources specific to the “Expectations Matter” campaign on topics ranging from parenting and education to employment available on the Council's website.

We knew these resources alone would not raise every expectation, or change every mind or every action, but we wanted to spur all of us – family members, providers, educators, employers, everyday citizens – to stop and think twice about what we think people with disabilities can do. To continue this work, the Council reconvened the Expectations Matter think tank and set aside \$20,000 to focus on raising expectations about people with developmental disabilities in their schools, homes, workplaces, and communities so everyone feels respected, welcomed, and supported like any other community member.

More Opportunities = Higher Expectations = More Inclusion = Greater Acceptance =

Expectations Matter. Expect Ability.

Dom, a 25-year-old with a developmental disability, works at a Dorchester County bakery, as a dishwasher. With encouragement from his job coach, and because she “raised expectations”, Dom's confidence increased, and he now works independently 3 days a week. “Dom is an excellent employee, a hard worker who never misses a day. He even chooses to work the days around Thanksgiving and snow days,” says his boss.

12 PROMOTING INNOVATION

AN INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE

The Council invested \$45,791 in Small Grants, and \$15,500 in Education Training and Event Sponsorships (ETES) in 2019. Local organizations understand best the need of their community, and these investments help more Marylanders with developmental disabilities, family members, professionals, and the public increase knowledge, and promote innovation in local organizations. 605 people with developmental disabilities and family members participated in the following activities:

- ▶ The Chesapeake Down Syndrome Parent Group hosted the Techniques for Success Conference to provide strategies about educating students with disabilities and promote and support inclusive education. "I am planning to incorporate new techniques to assist my child", said one of the 400 attendees.
- ▶ The Arc of Baltimore hosted an Education Series aimed to support independent living, advocacy, and sexuality. "I learned a lot and will be passing what I learned to others."
- ▶ The University of Maryland's annual Disability Summit prioritized accessibility for the 250 attendees and focused discussions on the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- ▶ Honestly Autism Day, hosted by the Autism Society of Baltimore, provided information and resources to over 500 attendees.
- ▶ The Wrightslaw conference, hosted by Parents Place of Maryland, educated 146 attendees about special education laws and practices.
- ▶ People on the Go, in partnership with Project Action, the Washington D.C. based self-advocacy group, celebrated their 30th anniversary. Maryland Governor Hogan presented POG with a citation for their 30 years of service to the state.
- ▶ A Hispanic Community Resources initiative, in partnership with People on the Go empowered people with developmental disabilities in Hispanic communities to be leaders.
- ▶ The Arc Maryland's "Together We're Better" inclusive awareness campaign and artwork contest in elementary and middle schools raised awareness of the value and importance of diversity in our schools.
- ▶ Shared Support MD expanded awareness about self-directed services through "Raising Awareness, Engagement, and Action in Self-Direction" webinar-based trainings. 15 family members and 3 people with developmental disabilities participated.




"I learned to use the Cardinal Rule of treating others how you want to be treated, that the same goes with someone who has a disability, treat them like I would want to be treated."

-Together We're Better student from Pine Grove Elementary

2019 BY THE NUMBERS

 **3,973** people trained through Council-supported initiatives

 **26** committees/councils served on to improve policies, programs, and practices

 **37** programs/policies created or improved

 **188** legislators educated about issues related to developmental disabilities

 **26,011** members of general public educated about developmental disability issues

 **123** child care providers received training and technical assistance

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2020 and beyond, the Council is investing in new and diverse initiatives to broaden our impact. These include:

Roots of Inclusion: The Council funded Abilities Network to increase the knowledge, skills, and capacity of directors, owners, and other leaders in the child care community. This project will help them design, implement, and sustain inclusive early childhood programs.

Partners in Policymaking: Due to the success of the Partners program, The Arc Maryland received funding to continue providing leadership training to people with developmental disabilities and family members.

Transforming and Improving Practices (TIP) Grants: The Council again partnered with Maryland Works to award TIP grants to more organizations to help them improve how they support people to get and keep employment.

Eastern Shore Provider Transformation CoP: Through training and technical assistance, this project supports 12 providers in all 9 counties of the Eastern Shore to address barriers to transportation,

recruitment and retention of direct support professionals, and improve and enhance stakeholder buy-in so more people work and have meaningful days when not working.

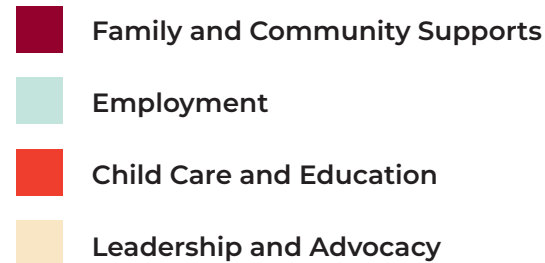
Expectations Matter – My Life, My Plan, My Choice: Shared Support Maryland will develop a user-friendly, plain language training and guide about the person-centered planning process, and then conduct training sessions.

LEADers Hybrid: Building upon the success of previous LEADers initiatives, the Council funded Parents Place of Maryland to develop a condensed LEADers “hybrid” course focusing on families in Western Maryland as well as the Haitian and Spanish-speaking communities on the Eastern Shore.

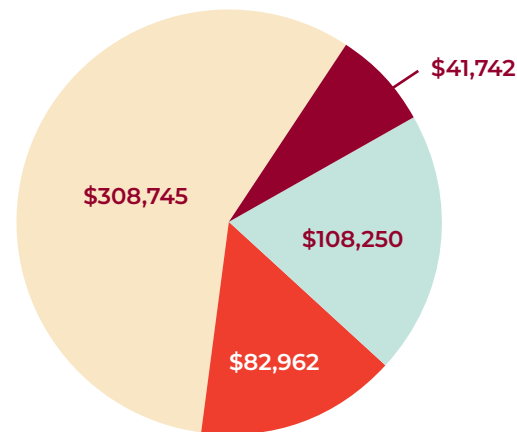
Expanding “Expectations Matter Expect Ability”: The Council will focus on raising expectations about people with developmental disabilities in their schools, homes, workplaces, and communities so everyone feels respected, welcomed, and supported like any other community member.

INVESTMENTS IN MARYLAND

The Council considers our grant funding to be an investment that builds a better and more inclusive community, ultimately building a stronger Maryland



*obligated and/or expended in FY2019



MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL MEMBERS & STAFF

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